

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

PRIORITY 2659

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T LUSAKA 0625

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

USUN FOR AMB YOUNG

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PDEV RH UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: US-UK RELATIONSHIP

REF: (A) STATE 049706, (B) STATE 050906

1. EVENTS ARE MOVING SO RAPIDLY THAT IT IS DIFFICULT
TO KEEP UP WITH THEM FROM THIS DISTANCE. WE ARE GETTING
THE IMPRESSION BOTH FROM CLASSIFIED TRAFFIC AND PUBLIC
STATEMENTS THAT A BASIC CHANGE IS OCCURRING AND WE ARE
CONCERNED THAT IN THE PROCESS WE ARE EXPOSING OURSELVES

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TO CRITICISM WHICH WILL AFFECT OUR CREDIBILITY AND LESSEN
THE INFLUENCE WE CAN BRING TO BEAR AT A LATER DATE.

2. WE AGREED TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE BRITISH ON A SPECIFIC
PLAN TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA; NOT TO COOPERATE
WITH THEM IN ALL EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN
PROBLEM. THE INITIATIVE ON WHICH WE EMBARKED LAST APRIL

APPEARS TO BE COMING TO AN END. WE NEED TO CONSIDER WHETHER WE SHOULD EXTEND THE PARTNERSHIP TO THE EFFORT TO SHAPE AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT OR SIMPLY STAND WITH THEM ON THE AAP.

3. THE AAP IS COMING TO AN END BECAUSE, UNLESS WE ARE ACTUALLY WILLING TO SIT DOWN AND TALK TO THE PF ABOUT TERMS OF THE AAP, GENERAL STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR IT WILL APPEAR TO BE LIP SERVICE ONLY. IN THIS SENSE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE TALKING POINTS PROPOSED TO THE BRITISH (REFTEL A) GO FAR ENOUGH SINCE THEY DO NOT SPECIALLY SAY (AND MEAN) THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS PROMPTLY IF THE PF IS WILLING TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLES WE HAVE SET OUT GOVERNING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, IT LOOKS FROM HERE LIKE WE ARE PREPARING TO ENTER INTO A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION WITH THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO SHAPE A SETTLEMENT WHICH COULD BE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE. WHILE WE ARE NOT PROPOSING TO GIVE THEM A COMMITMENT, OUR SUPPORT IS CERTAINLY IMPLIED IF THEY CAN WREST FROM SMITH THE KIND OF AGREEMENT WHICH WE ARE OUTLINING TO MUZOREWA AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS. PUBLICLY THE PRESS AND RADIO HERE ARE FULL OF SITHOLE'S STATEMENT THAT OWEN PROMISED IN LONDON TO SUPPORT THE INTERNAL OPTION PROVIDED THERE WAS A REFERENDUM OF THE BLACK POPULATION, SMITH DID NOT HEAD THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, AND IT CONTAINED A BLACK MAJORITY OF MINISTERS.

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THE IMPRESSION HAS BEEN GIVEN AND IS BEING WIDELY ACCEPTED HERE THAT THE BRITISH ARE NOW WORKING WITH THE PARTICIPANTS TO FASHION AN ACCEPTABLE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

5. ON THE BASIS OF INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REFTEL B, WE BELIEVE THAT VERY SHORTLY MUZOREWA AND SMITH WILL DECLARE THAT THEY HAVE ASSURANCES FROM THE U.S. AND UK OF SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT PROVIDING SOME GENERAL CONDITIONS ARE MET.

6. WE HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO SETTLE THE RHODESIA PROBLEM IS THROUGH THE AAP AND ACCEPT THAT THE DAY MAY COME WHEN IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO THROW OUR WEIGHT BEHIND AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. WE MIGHT EVEN CONCEDE THAT THERE ARE ARGUMENTS FOR THE BRITISH TRYING TO SHAPE SUCH A SETTLEMENT NOW WHILE THEY CAN HAVE AN INFLUENCE IN THE MATTER.

7. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, HOWEVER, THE ADVANTAGES OF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BRITISH IN DEVELOPING OUR SEPTEMBER 1 PROPOSAL DO NOT NECESSARILY EXTEND TO THE VERY DIFFERENT INITIATIVE ON WHICH THEY ARE NOW EMBARKING. IN OUR VIEW,

THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH WE COULD CONTINUE ENGAGING WITH THE BRITISH IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WOULD BE IF WE WERE GENUINELY WILLING TO DO THE SAME WITH THE PF ON THE AAP. IF WE ARE HESITANT ABOUT ENTERING INTO SUCH DISCUSSIONS SOON (AND WE ACCEPT THERE MAY BE VERY GOOD REASONS FOR SUCH HESITANCY), THEN WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT JOIN THE BRITISH IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ON HOW TO SHAPE AN ACCEPTABLE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. THE FL LEADERS WILL NOT BE EASILY MISLED. THEY WILL CRITICIZE A "HOLDING ACTION" ON THE AAP PAIRED WITH ACTIVE MEETINGS WITH THE INTERNAL NATIONALIST.

IF THEY JUDGE THAT ARE LOSING HEART IN SUPPORT OF THE AAP AND AT THE SAME TIME JOINING WITH THE BRITISH IN DISCUSSING AN ACCEPTABLE INTERNAL SECRET

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SETTLEMENT, THEY WILL REACT STRONGLY. WE BELIEVE WE WILL QUICKLY LOSE THEIR CONFIDENCE IN US AND WE WILL FORFEIT THE INFLUENCE WHICH WE HAVE BUILT UP OVER THE LAST YEAR.

8. IF, THEN, PROGRESS IS MADE TOWARDS A SATISFACTORY INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, WE WILL AT A LATER DATE BE LESS ABLE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN BRINGING THE PARTIES TOGETHER THAN WE WOULD HAVE BEEN HAD WE STAYED ALOOF FROM BRITISH EFFORTS TO SHAPE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND MAINTAINED OUR TIES WITH THE FL, NIGERIANS AND OTHER BLACK AFRICANS.

9. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT WE ARE PROBABLY A LONG WAY FROM A SETTLEMENT IN SALISBURY. SMITH WILL HOLD OUT ADAMANTLY FOR A MAXIMUM POSITION FOR HIMSELF AND THE WHITE COMMUNITY, WHILE MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WILL REALIZE THAT THEY CANNOT SUCCEED WITHOUT SOME MAJOR CONCESSIONS FROM HIM. AS WITH OUR OWN INITIATIVE, THE FINAL DECISION MAY BE UP TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS. ONLY THEY WILL BE IN A POSITION EVENTUALLY TO FORCE SMITH TO ACCEPT SOMETHING WHICH MUZOREWA, SITHOLE AND PRESUMABLY THE BRITISH CAN LIVE WITH. AT THAT POINT OUR INFLUENCE WITH SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. IF WE HAVE PRESERVED OUR TIES WITH THE FL AND OTHER BLACK AFRICANS, WE WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS WITH AUTHORITY. SIMILARLY, IF WE HAVE NOT YET COMMITTED OURSELVES TO THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT PROCESS, WE CAN OFFER SOMETHING WHICH WILL BE OF GREAT VALUE THEN. THUS IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THE CLINCHER NECESSARY TO BRING SOUTH AFRICAN WEIGHT AGAINST SMITH IF WE STAY OUT OF THE PROCESS AT THIS STAGE. HOWEVER, IF WE HAVE SIMPLY BACKED THE BRITISH THROUGH THEIR SWITCH FROM THE AAP TO SALISBURY, WE WILL HAVE LESS AUTHORITY TO DO SO.

10. I RECOGNIZE THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO DO, BUT AT

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THIS STAGE, AND FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT, IT APPEARS THAT
WE WOULD BE BETTER OFF DISTANCING OURSELVES FROM THE BRITISH
AND LETTING THEM DELIVER THE TALKING POINTS TO MUZOREWA.
SO FAR AS THE DEMARCHE TO THEIKL PRESIDENTS GO, I BELIEVE
THEY SHOULD BE MADE SEPARATELY, THOUGH WE MIGHT AGREE ON
THE BASIS TALKING POINTS. IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
IAM AFRAID THE DEMARCHE WILL RAPIDLY DETERIORATE INTO
RECRIMINATIONS AGAINST THE BRITISH IN WHICH WE WILL SHARE--
UNLESS, AS I SAY, WE ARE PREPARED TO AGREE TO SAY THAT WE
ARE WILLING TO BEGIN MEETINGS RIGHT AWAY WITH THE PF.

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